

February 24, 2022 Testimony for: H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 202

My name is Diane Aubin and I am from Niantic. I am testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 that unfortunately does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees.

After decades of underfunding, Connecticut's direct support providers are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees. This staff is critically important to the safety and well-being of many of Connecticut's residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), including my own family.

My adult cousin has an intellectual disability and relies on his daily program, services and supports to avoid severe behavioral episodes. This has been a lifelong struggle for him and his family. Since his mom's passing, it has been even more difficult for him and the remaining family. His daily program is even more important to maintaining positive behavioral habits and decreasing outbursts. His daily services and supports do make the difference in his life, he cannot manage without those individuals and the positive and meaningful consistency to address coping strategies and redirection they provide.

Without your help, our state's community service delivery system will continue to shrink and our loved ones will bear the brunt of this loss. We are already experiencing the worst staffing crisis that service providers have ever seen, which has resulted in an inability to resume programs paused during COVID and caused a rebound effect for family caregivers who are unable to return to work and contribute to Connecticut's economy.

Now more than ever, we need to ensure that critically necessary funding of \$150 million is included in this year's budget for the state's non-profit providers who care for our loved ones on a daily basis. We urge your support and ask that you add this funding to the budget before this committee. My cousin, as well as all individuals with I/DD matter.

Thank you,

Diane Aubin